



THE PINE LINE



Vol. 24, No. 1

Newsletter of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society

Winter 2005

Dedicated to the Preservation and Understanding of Long Island's Pitch Pine / Scrub Oak Woodlands

BOND ACTS APPROVED \$255 Million for Nassau and Suffolk Counties

By lopsided margins, four environmental bond acts were approved by referenda in November. They will provide \$255 million for Nassau and Suffolk Counties and Brookhaven and Oyster Bay Towns to protect drinking water, preserve open space and improve parks. Passage was the top priority of environmentalists for 2004.

Nassau County voters approved a \$50 million bond act, with a 77 percent plurality. Suffolk passed a \$75 million referendum by a 67 percent margin. The \$100 million Brookhaven Bond Act won with 70 percent of the vote, while Oyster Bay's \$30 million proposition garnered 71 percent.

The Bond Acts will be used to acquire sensitive land in and out of the Pine Barrens and will purchase development rights on farmland in both counties. Protecting drinking water and critical habitat is a priority in all of the bond acts. Creating new and improving existing Long Island parks is also authorized by the initiatives.

Long Island was responsible for nearly half of all the money approved in environmental referenda across the country. PBS Executive Director Richard Amper said, "Long Islanders continue their tradition of voting for Mother Nature, whenever she's on the ballot!"



ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES: Environmentalists from Great Neck to Montauk rallied to support four environmental bond referenda. All were approved, producing \$255 million for drinking water protection, habitat preservation and parks. *Pine Barrens Society photo.*

Fight Clear Cutting in Pine Barrens Core



PINE BARRENS NEWS: Reporters cover news conference opposing clear cutting for proposed gas pipeline in Core Preservation Area. *Pine Barrens Society photo.*

Environmentalists are pressing efforts to prevent the loss of more than six acres of Pine Barrens in the sensitive Core Preservation Area in Yaphank in connection with the construction of a natural gas pipeline to the East End.

The project, being advanced by KeySpan Energy, a past winner of the Society's top environmental award, is set to begin before summer. The Society has asked that an alternate route, that does not involve clearing, be required by the New York State Pine Barrens Commission when it considers the KeySpan application for a "hardship exemption."

The Society was joined by more than a half dozen environmental groups in calling on New York Governor George Pataki and U.S. Senator Charles Schumer to obtain waivers from the New York State Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. The waivers would permit construction of the pipeline in the shoulder of the Long Island Expressway, an area already cleared. KeySpan said that there may be other routes that would not require clearing.

ENVIRONMENTAL & CIVIC GROUPS OPPOSE BROADWATER GAS PROJECT

Huge Coalition Fights Broadwater LNG Facility in L.I. Sound Dozens of Organizations Involved Proposal Called "Shoreham of the Decade"

An Island-wide coalition comprised of dozens of environmental and civic organizations is opposing a proposed Liquefied Natural Gas facility, intended to be anchored in Long Island Sound. The Anti-Broadwater Coalition (ABC) cited safety and environmental concerns as among the many reasons for fighting the project which they term, "the Shoreham of the decade," alluding to the defeated nuclear power plant.

With the abandoned power plant in the background, dozens of placard-carrying community leaders gathered January 18 to announce their opposition to the proposal to off-load super-tankers full of super-cooled and highly-flammable liquefied natural gas through a floating platform the size of the Queen Mary II, anchored in Long Island Sound, nine miles north of Wading River. The platform would be connected to an environmentally-damaging 25-mile pipeline, constructed under the Sound to bring the natural gas to New York City and other locations.

"This is the most irresponsible proposal since the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant," said Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment. "It represents unproven technology which is accident and terrorist attack prone, and which carries enormous environmental threats and few, if any, benefits for our region," she added. The Anti-Broadwater Coalition said the decision to oppose the project was "as simple as ABC." The leaders called on town, county, state and federal officials to kill the project immediately "before it gets railroaded through by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in Washington, which has significant authority and routinely supports LNG projects," according to Kyle Rabin, Executive Director of Friends of the Bay in Oyster Bay. FERC has already removed economic and



ANTI-BROADWATER COALITION: Environmental and civic leaders rally in front of the defunct Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant to oppose Liquefied Natural Gas facility proposed for Long Island Sound. *Pine Barrens Society photo.*

regulatory barriers to the development of onshore LNG import terminals, and top FERC officials support LNG imports in speeches, presentations and meetings.

The Coalition issued a six-page "white paper" which indicts the proposed LNG terminal as dangerous and anti-environmental. Fifty-one LNG terminals have been proposed for North America, but only half a dozen of those are expected to be approved and only four exist today. "Long Island's geography and population center make evacuation in an emergency impossible, which is the same reason we abandoned the Shoreham nuclear power plant. If only a few of these dangerous facilities are to be built, they should be built in a more appropriate area," said Richard Johannesen of the Rocky Point Civic Association and the 40-member Affiliated Brookhaven Civic Organization, which were among the first groups to oppose the plan.

The Coalition said it was launching a "full court press" against the project, including appeals to public officials, a massive public education campaign, public hearings and demonstrations. "This will be the biggest grass roots campaign in years," said Sid Bail, President of the Wading River Civic Association, the first group to oppose Broadwater. He added, "Long Island's very survival is on the line - we can do nothing less than whatever is required."

By press time, 24 Long Island federal, state, county and town elected officials had come out opposed to the Broadwater proposal. The project will be reviewed by state and federal agencies, principally by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in Washington.





THE THICKET

The Eastern Hognose Snake

by Jeremy Feinberg

Jeremy Feinberg is a Biologist with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and based at the Brookhaven National Laboratory.

Jeremy plans to enter a doctoral program this fall and to continue conducting research in the Long Island Pine Barrens.

If we were to step back in time, say a hundred years ago, we would find a Long Island much different from the one we see today. We would find hardwood forests to the north, coastal marshes and dune complexes to the south, meadows, grasslands, and wetlands in west-central locales, and a quarter-million acres of Pine Barrens in the east-central regions. Simply stated, we would find an island that bridged the gap between northern and southern ecosystems and boasted an incredible assortment of natural diversity, both in terms of habitats and species. I often wonder why so many people are surprised by this. After all, Long Island is the largest island in the continental United States, and thus able to provide the size and space necessary to support its natural wonders.

Let us return to our trip back in time to 1908. We find ourselves on Rockaway Beach along the south shore of Queens. A scientist has taken note of a "hieroglyphic network" of small trails in the sand. These trails were not formed by legions of beachgoers or children with plastic toys as we might expect today, but rather by young Eastern Hognose Snakes (*Heterodon platyrhinos*) moving and hunting toads among dunes of this unspoiled paradise. And these trails were not made by just one or a few snakes, but by "amazing numbers" of this highly "abundant" species. This scenario is an actual account titled "Long Island Snakes" from a 1915 edition of the scientific journal *Copeia*. Today Rockaway Beach lies in the shadows of Kennedy Airport and boasts run-down housing projects and garbage filled beaches. Hognose Snakes are but a faded memory on these shores.

Similar historic accounts provide a chronological record of the Hognose as it disappeared throughout Long Island. As subdivisions, roads, and strip-malls appeared, open habitat, toads, and Hognose Snakes vanished. Incidentally, the loss of these populations in Suffolk seems to have sealed the fate for the less common melanistic (black) and chocolate (brown) "color morphs." (Hognose have several different color types.)

By the mid-1990s, most experts considered Hognose to be all but extinct from the entirety of Long Island. I eventually began to lose hope. Then it happened one day while on a trip to the New Jersey Pine Barrens. There it was right in front of me; its pale beige color, brown blotches, distinct upturned snout, stout body, and unique disposition. I was elated. Then it began to live up to its famous reputation. First it hissed loudly. Then it flattened its head like a cobra and reared up. Next,



The Eastern Hognose Snake, a master of bluff, pulls a fake disappearing act on Long Island.

as I reached in, it began to strike menacingly. Despite my books having warned that this was merely the ruse of a completely harmless species, I was still terrified. Finally, I summoned my courage, fought the urge to recoil, and eventually reached a stalemate with the snake. In one final act of trickery, the snake began to writhe excitedly, then it coiled up, rolled over, and played dead with its tongue hanging limp all the while. It seemed to peer at me as I touched it. Eventually I flipped it over only to be amused as the snake flipped itself back upside down and "died" again!

For the most part, the behavior of Hognose Snakes is meant to deter predators, however the purpose of certain behaviors such as playing dead is still a topic of debate. The encounter had recharged my spirit and gave me hope that maybe one or a few hidden populations still existed deep within their remaining historic habitats on Long Island such as the Pine Barrens. Several years passed with no good news. Then it happened. Sometime between 2000 and 2001, several confirmed sightings of Eastern Hognose Snakes were reported in the Long Island Pine Barrens.

A few Hognose populations definitely remain, however the species is exceedingly rare. I have seen about forty Hognose and am aware of approximately ten additional sightings by other people over the past few years. This species needs space, lots of space. Some Hognose use up to 80 acres! Unfortunately Long Island is losing space each year. Hognose also need specific types of space, with open scrub or grasslands being essential to their survival. Unfortunately, this type of habitat is quite rare. There are nearly 3 million people on Long Island and only a few small populations of Hognose Snakes. If we want to assure the continued success of these gentle beasts, we need to respect them in the wild, avoid harming or capturing them and support efforts to preserve open land. If this happens, the Eastern Hognose Snake might stick around for a while longer.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RICHARD AMPER

The Conflict That Isn't

We have to balance the need for open space with the need for affordable housing." Over and over we have heard this refrain, particularly in the recent debate, now settled, over the Suffolk County Bond Act.

Never was an idea so simple, so apparent, and so wrong. The fact is we do not have to choose between open space and affordable housing; we need to choose both. For they are not competing interests, they are twin interests with a common enemy - - sprawl.

Since the dawn of suburbia, development has tromped across the Island unplanned and unchecked. More randomly than mushrooms, communities have sprouted wherever anyone had a notion to build one. Houses were put up, new school districts set up, separate and overlapping water districts created, village governments established. Then, miles away constructed office parks and miles in another direction, shopping centers. Don't worry about the distances: we can all just hop in our cars.

The results are the full list of Long Island's greatest ills. Inefficient use of infrastructure and fragmented government fuels sky-high taxes. Loss of open space uncivilizes us, imperils our tourism and farming economy, and threatens our drinking water. Unbearable traffic costs us time, money, dirty skies and jangled nerves.

And what have we got in return? Not affordable housing, that's for sure.

The statistics are staggering. Data from the Long Island Index reveal housing prices more than twice as high as the national average. At \$363,700, the average house costs more than four times the average family income, far above the 2.5 ratio considered affordable. In fact, a majority of Long Islanders could not afford today to purchase the homes they live in.

The results are sobering. Families breaking up as retirees and young people abandon the region. From 1990 to 2000, 20 percent of Long Islanders aged 18-34 left Long Island. That's a rate five times the national average. A new poll by the Long Island Index finds that 45 percent of Long Islanders consider it very likely or somewhat likely that they will leave the region in the next five years.

That's bad for families and bad for business, too. Our econ-

omy can't survive without keeping and attracting talented young people. Not to mention vital members of our workforce with moderate incomes from hospital aides, retail sales staff and trades people, to teachers, police, and firefighters.

So there's no doubt about it, we need affordable housing. But giving up open space won't get it. That only means more sprawl, the same old problem.

"The fact is, we do not have to choose between open space and affordable housing; we need to choose both. For they are not competing interests; they are twin interests with a common enemy - - sprawl."

The solution is sprawl's opposite. It's called smart growth, but the idea is simple. It just means building what we actually need, in the places where it makes sense.

It means increasing density where building belongs in revitalized downtowns and updated New England-style villages. Mixed-use development in downtown areas brings people, jobs and services together, stimulating economic growth. It uses resources more efficiently and takes advantage of infrastructure already in place, relieving pressure on taxes. Transportation is more efficient, too, reducing congestion and pol-

lution.

And that's just the start. Bring people back into town, and watch the market work its magic. While languishing businesses are reborn, innovative new enterprises and amenities emerge. Towns become vital and vibrant places: magnets to draw back the young, educated and curious - the people Long Island needs most to hold onto.

It's not just a promising idea; it's a reality that is already reaping benefits in forward-looking regions from Maryland to California. It's starting to appear on Long Island, too, although the label "smart growth" has also been stretched to win approval for projects that don't fit the description.

Smart growth has always been the vision of affordable housing advocates and has long been supported by environmentalists, despite the oft-repeated slander of us as "anti-growth". Business leaders have come aboard, too. And even politicians, perhaps emboldened by new polls showing these ideas winning increased favor with the public, are raising the profile of the issue as never before. The increasing consensus and sense of urgency is all to the good. Now it's time to act.

It's not as if there is a choice. We can't stand pat, or we will lose our place among the nation's most prosperous and progressive regions. We can't go back to dumb old sprawl. The only way is forward. Maybe "smart growth" gives us too much credit. "No-brainer" would be more apt.



PINE BARRENS SOCIETY PRESIDENT ALAN SINGER

Broadwater: The Shoreham of the Decade

Every once in awhile, a truly bad idea comes along. People who stand to make a lot of money usually put it forth. And they always tell us that they're only doing it for us. The latest and most absurd is the proposed Broadwater Project. It involves anchoring a vessel larger than the Queen Mary II nine miles north of Wading River in Long Island Sound. Its product? Highly flammable Liquefied Natural Gas which would come from foreign countries in super-tankers will come within a mile of the Island's north shore and closer still to Plum and Fishers Islands.

Broadwater is a joint undertaking of TransCanada Corporation and Shell Oil. The \$700 million proposal claims itself as clean, affordable energy, which will reduce our dependency on foreign oil. Let's think about that. Gas is cleaner than oil, but its mining and transportation produces more greenhouse gases and energy inefficiency, losing about half of the claimed benefit. Natural gas is not cheaper once the nations that produce it completely control its supply, just like the oil producing nations do now. It's not clear why we would prefer to be dependent on foreign gas than on foreign oil.

What's more, LIPA, KeySpan and the new Caithness Energy tell us Long Island doesn't need natural gas from the proposed Broadwater scheme. We have more than adequate supplies. And Broadwater admits that most of the imported gas won't go to Long Island anyway. That means Long Island would get little benefit and enormous risk.

That's the biggest problem with the Broadwater plan. Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) has a terrible safety record: some 30 accidents involving hundreds of deaths and billions in property damage. And that doesn't even consider today's added risk of terrorism.

Terrorists' preferred method of attack is to commandeer large vehicles with massive quantities of flammable fuel. Our government has recognized that LNG ships and facilities are potential targets for terrorist attacks. During the recent Democratic National Convention in Boston, an LNG facility was closed, not by environmentalists but by the Office of Homeland Security. If the Broadwater project were to be allowed, eastern Long Island would be ground zero for a potentially catastrophic accident or attack.

Then there's the issue of environmental impacts. The LNG facility would be anchored to the floor of Long Island Sound and connected to an existing gas main 25 miles to the west.

Broadwater acknowledges disruption of the Sound bottom during construction and this unproven technology could produce other adverse environmental impacts. What for?

If approved, this dangerous plan would also mark the beginning of the industrialization of Long Island Sound. At present,

government is responsible for stewardship and efforts are being made to restore this estuary of national significance. What a terrible policy to establish industrial facilities in the middle of the Sound that belongs to the residents of New York and Connecticut, not to a multi-national energy corporation.

Finally, proponents of sustainable energy, conservation and alternative methods like wind, solar and fuel cells,

warn that the Broadwater project will set back efforts to develop renewable energy by three decades.

The Society focuses mainly on drinking water protection and open space preservation. But the Broadwater proposal is so dangerously wrong that no responsible environmental organization can ignore the threat. That's why we've joined with dozens of other environmental and civic organizations to try to stop Broadwater before its approval becomes the sole purview of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in Washington --a powerful agency with the authority to override home rule.

Long Island's leading elected officials are responding to our call to oppose Broadwater. This is a project that must die quickly. Stay tuned.

"The Broadwater proposal is so dangerously wrong that no responsible environmental organization can ignore the threat."

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"We mean business about the environment"

A copy of the last annual report filed with the NYS Department of Law may be obtained by writing the Department at Office Tower, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12242 or may be obtained directly from the Long Island Pine Barrens Society, Box 429, Manorville, New York 11949-9801.

BNL & Nancy Douzinas Honored

27th Anniversary Gala Sets New Records

Brookhaven National Laboratory received the Pine Barrens Society's award for "Outstanding Contribution to Long Island's Environment" and Dr. Nancy Douzinas, President of the Rauch Foundation, received the "Environmental Achievement Award" at the Society's 27th Anniversary Environmental Awards Gala. More than 250 attended the event, held at Carlyle on the Green in Bethpage State Park, on October 7, 2004. The gala set income and attendance records for the Society.

BNL was honored for its expedited and thorough clean-up of its facility in Upton, in the heart of the Central Pine Barrens and for the Lab's educational programs. Dr. Douzinas and the Rauch Foundation were cited for their support of environmental programs on Long Island and Maryland and for their introduction of the Long Island Index, an indicators project that measures Long Island's progress in economic, environmental and social areas.

The event was chaired by John Kanas, President and Chief Executive Officer of North Fork Bankcorp.



OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION: BNL Director Dr. Praveen Chaudari receives PBS's top award from Executive Director Richard Amper and President Alan Singer.



VIP'S: Suffolk County Director of Environment Michael Deering, Suffolk Legislator Dan Losquadro and Deputy Suffolk County Executive Kevin Law enjoy the event.



CHAIRMAN & HOST: John Kanas, President and Chief Executive Officer of North Fork Bankcorp served as Chairman of the Society's 27th anniversary awards gala.



ANKER & ANCHOR: Long Island activist Sarah Anker, and Heather Holmes, environmental reporter and anchor for News 12 Long Island flank lucky executive director.



SPECIAL GUESTS: Society Co-founder and Brookhaven Town planner John Turner, Kevin McDonald of The Nature Conservancy and Peter Scully of D.E.C. relax and enjoy.



ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT: Dr. Nancy Douzinas of the Rauch Foundation accepts honors from Richard Amper and John Turner at the gala, held October 7, 2004. *Pine Barrens Society photos.*

Pine Barrens Society & KeySpan Foundation Set Earth Day Contest

The Long Island Pine Barrens Society and the KeySpan Foundation will sponsor a contest for Long Island students to commemorate the 35th anniversary of Earth Day, April 22, 2005.

Fourth and fifth graders will design posters, seventh and eighth graders will produce newspaper ads and eleventh and twelfth graders will write essays, all on the theme "Name one of today's greatest environmental challenges and what can be done about it." First prize winners in each grade will receive \$1000 scholarships; second prize winners \$500 scholarships and



third prize winners \$250 scholarships. The scholarships are being donated by the KeySpan Foundation.

"This is a fun and educational project intended to enhance environmental awareness among children of all ages," said Pine Barrens Society President Alan Singer. Information on the contest can be obtained from the Society's website, www.pinebarrens.org, or by calling the

Society at 631.369.3300. Winners will be announced on Earth Day with the winning entries displayed in Long Island media.

New Board Members

The Long Island Pine Barrens Society has appointed two distinguished Long Island leaders to its volunteer Board of Directors. Regina Seltzer, the Society's pro bono attorney and Tom Casey, a leader of the Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference were named in January.

The Board of Directors makes all policy decisions for the

Society whose day-to-day operations are conducted by Executive Director, Richard Amper. Mr. Amper is not a board member.

"Our legal advice now comes directly to the board and we've acquired one of the most knowledgeable people on Pine Barrens recreation," said PBS President Alan Singer.

Society Gets New Manager

The Long Island Pine Barrens Society has announced the appointment of Susie Husted to become Program Manager of the respected environmental education and advocacy organization, based in Riverhead. A native Long Islander, Ms. Husted, 31, comes to the Society with a broad range of non-profit organizational experience, from New York City to New England.

Ms. Husted has a Bachelors degree in Philosophy and Justice Studies from the University of New Hampshire, and has completed coursework for a Masters of Library Science from the City University of New York at Queens College.

For the past five years, she worked closely with advocacy organizations including serving on the board of the "If I Can Read, I Can Do Anything" project supporting Native American reservation school libraries, and the American Indian Library Association.

Most recently Ms. Husted was a lead coordinator for the 2004 Boston Social Forum, a three-day event bringing together over 5,000 people and organized by over 70 community organizations. Ms. Husted's work for the event included directing volunteer activities, coordinating business, organization and cultural vendors, and serving as primary grant-writer and administrative coordinator.

Ms. Husted will be responsible for the Society's strategic and tactical programs for drinking water protection and habitat preservation, working directly with the Society's Executive Director, Richard Amper.

Society President Alan Singer said, "We are most fortunate to gain the benefits of Ms. Husted's education and experience and have high hopes for what she will bring to the preservation efforts of the place she has always considered home."



NEW LONG ISLAND ENVIRONMENTAL LEADER: Community Organizer Susie Husted, the new Program Manager for the Long Island Pine Barrens Society. *Pine Barrens Society photo.*



GLOBALLY RARE: The Calverton Ponds are an extraordinary example of Coastal Plain Ponds. *Photo by Granville Fairchild*

Adirondack Mountain Club of Long Island Spring Outing 2005

June 17-19, 2005

Friday to Sunday

Adirondack Mountain Club of Long Island is sponsoring a weekend offering 26 guided beach walks, hikes, winery tours, paddling trips, bike rides, sailing charters, fishing trips and more. John Turner, Pine Barrens Society Co-founder and resident naturalist will accompany and interpret a Sunday hike on the Paumonok Path in Manorville to Sandy and Sandy Grass ponds. Weekend registration is \$25. For details and a downloadable registration form, visit www.adkli.org, or call Sue Stricker at 631.368.5167.

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